

**Learning (Intellectual) Disability**  
Getting it right for patients with a learning disability

**Better Care - Healthier Lives**  
*Everyone has a right to be safe*



*Together we can get it right*

**Information and Guidance**

Created by  
Jim Blair Consultant Nurse Intellectual (Learning) Disabilities

Created by Jim Blair at  
Great Ormond Street Hospital

**Insert your NHS  
logo here**

**[Insert name & role)**  
for patients with a learning disability



Contact **[insert name]** –  
*Together we can get it right*



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## Core principles underpinning Intellectual (Learning) Disability work

The following forms the foundation of the way we deliver care to people with learning disabilities and their families.

1. **Value driven** - patients can contribute to their care
2. **Positive communication** - increase the use of positive terminology and place an emphasis on appropriate communication
3. **Appreciate the interaction** - between the individual and their environment. Understand their life experiences and how they express themselves
4. **Increase independence** - while acknowledging the stage or age of an individual it is important to focus on developing their independence
5. **Promote emotional literacy** - ensure that patients have opportunities to express themselves and help and support them to understand their own feelings
6. **Create a positive environment** - welcoming setting - it is important to acknowledge each patient's individuality, culture and life experience so that they are valued and important members of the hospital community
7. **Focus on individual support** - each person is an individual and will respond to positively being addressed by their name and if the service takes into account their needs rather than merely those of a group
8. **Work towards achievable goals** - set goals that motivate and are achievable within a timescale that is reasonable for that individual and/or for the service they are using

For more information and advice [www.govh.nhs.uk/intellectual-learning-disability](http://www.govh.nhs.uk/intellectual-learning-disability)

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## Learning Disability Alerts for patients with a learning disability



Flag the patient by sticking it on the notes

Email: [insert email address]

- Name
- Hospital Number
- Date of birth

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## The Learning Disability Protocol for Preparation for Theatre and Recovery

- Discuss the patient's needs with them and their family/carers.
- Use 'comforters' to relax the patient pre op and in recovery .
- Document and handover to colleagues.



- a) Lower levels of noise and light
- b) Place the patient in a quiet area within recovery
- c) Ensure parents/carers are present and involved.
- d) Gradually recover observing how the patient is progressing

### **If the patient is disturbed or distressed in Recovery:**

1. Call an anaesthetist to use sedation to induce a relaxed, sleepier state.
2. Increase levels of sedation as required.

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# Everybody's Life Has Worth for patients with a learning disability



Succeed in doing what is necessary

- Beware of missing serious illness
- Find the best way to communicate
- Make reasonable adjustments
- Rely more on visual information
- Give more time for processing

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# The Hospital Passport

## for patients with a learning disability



Use a Hospital Passport to find out about your patient

- Likes Dislikes
- What is important
- How to ask what they need
- How they express pain
- How to take their blood
- How to take their observations

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# Pictures say more than words for patients with a learning disability



[www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk](http://www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk)

## Be creative communicate differently

Pictures  
Photographs  
Signs  
Music  
Drawing  
Symbols  
Videos  
Jargon free language

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# Reasonable Care Adjustments for patients with a learning disability



## How to get care right

Involve the patient & their families / carers

Offer double appointment

Offer first or last appointment

Act on the hospital passport

Change the environment

Make information easy to understand

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# Assessing Capacity

for patients with a learning disability



Carry out 4 point capacity test if you think the person does not understand enough to give their consent

Is the person able to;

1. **Understand** the information relevant to the decision?
2. **Retain** the information long enough to make the decision?
3. **Use or weigh up** the information – benefits & risks?
4. **Communicate** their decision – gestures or behaviour?

Be clear on the Law about capacity to consent if in doubt contact [insert the name of your organisation] Legal Department

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# Annual Health Checks for patients with a learning disability

Better Care – Healthier Lives



Thoughts, feelings, moods



**Any other health problems**

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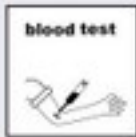
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# Annual Health Checks for patients with a learning disability

Better Care – Healthier Lives :



Epilepsy



blood test



Pain



Diabetes



Urine test



HeartHealth

**Any other health problems**

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Thoughts, feelings, moods

**Any other health problems**

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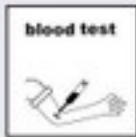
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